THE NEW YORKER

# THE TALK OF THE TOWN

## *Recollections*

THIS hand-lettered invitation came in the mail. It read:

Mr. Alexander J. Burke, Jr.
President
McGraw-Hill Book Company
cordially invites

to attend a luncheon
on Tuesday, the fourteenth of November
at half after twelve o'clock
in honour of
ELVIS:
Based on the Recollections of
Lamar Fike and the American People
by Albert Goldman

The Luncheon: Based on the recollections of some of the guests at the luncheon:

R. Couri Hay, celebrity columnist for the *National Enquirer* and star and producer of his own celebrity-interview show on Channel C, local cable-TV station: "The invitation was first-class. All the important media people were there. The narrated slide show of Elvis was outrageous. I just couldn't believe the dialogue. The lunch, I am sure, was very good. I couldn't stay. I had to get ready to leave for the Coast. And ever since I've been on TV I haven't been able to eat. I only wish I could have stayed, but I've got to rush off to the Coast."

**NOVEMBER 27, 1978**

## *Off to China*

R. COURI HAY, who is the celebrity columnist for the *National Enquirer* and the star and producer of his own celebrity-interview show on Channel C, a local cable-television station, said over the telephone the other day, "I am going to China. I will be there over the holidays. It's going to be very interesting, because, let's face it, China has turned around. My God, I think they are going to be welcoming us with American flags. I'm going with Zandra Rhodes. You know who Zandra Rhodes is? Well, she's in fashion. [We can't seem to escape it this week.] Zandra is taking her sketchbook, because they have promised to open up some museums for us. I'm sure her next collection will have a Chinese influence. I am taking summer clothes and winter clothes. I mean, we're going to hot China and cold China. I am taking jeans, of course, long underwear, L. L. Bean boots, my new Ralph Lauren baseball jacket lined with nutria. It's in red poplin. I'm not expecting any trouble in China. I mean, they are embracing capitalism. I am going to dress in red, white, and blue—I don't want people to think I am Russian, or something. That should be fun. I am hoping the hotels will be great. We're not allowed to tip, but it was suggested to us that we take little trinkets. I am going to take key chains with the Empire State Building attached to them. That should be fun. We've also been told not to take any ties or suits. Absolutely no ties. Interesting. For me to go away on a vacation, I have to go to extremes to avoid gossip. I mean, I can't just go to Europe, or something like that. That's why I am going to China quick. With their new capitalist thinking, and our recognizing them, and all that, soon it might be like going to the Coast. I have been practicing with my chopsticks, though secretly I am hoping the food will be lousy, so that I can lose a few pounds. That's what I would like while I'm there. A diet free of gossip and calories. We're leaving from San Francisco and stopping off in Manila to attend a dinner given by Mme. Marcos. Then to Hong Kong, which is a pretty normal place. I think it's so interesting how you get to places. We'll be going to China by train from Hong Kong. That sounds interesting. When we get to China, one of the places we are going to is Sian. Sian is such a marvellous idea. I mean, this is so unseen by white eyes. Seven months ago, I went to Cuba, but I had to go by way of Mexico. When you go to these strange Communist countries, you have to go to another country first. On the way back, I had to charter a plane to the Bahamas. The pilot couldn't speak English. Later, I found out we almost crashed. He couldn't read the map. But how many people charter a plane from Cuba?"

Jan. 1, 1979

about Serious Matters (one-hour programs, three twenty-minute segments) to "suit the listening environment of the airline cabin." I have never thought of myself as invading a "listening environment" when I have made my way along the narrow, crowded aisle to the smoking-permitted section—often an arduous journey, not lightened by the glares of disapproval that smokers get nowadays. Whenever I can, which is most of the time, I take along enough reading to last the flight. where headsets bringing us the wit and wisdom of Max Lerner and Norman Cousins might be welcome substitutes for the earplugs we keep forgetting to buy.

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## *Chanel*

SINCE nothing pleases us more than a chance to observe the making of a footnote to history, we lost no time in accepting an invitation from Christie's,

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## *Up Here*

NEAR the summit of Ferris Hill in Inwood, the highest natural point on Manhattan Island, in one of a very few private homes in the area, resides the most active member of the Washington Heights Historical Society, Mr. Edward McGuinness. Mr.